

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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TAGS: ELAB, MILI, IZ
SUBJECT: IRAQI GOVERNMENT GIVES PAY INCREASES

1. ON JANUARY 5, THE EVE OF IRAQI ARMY DAY, THE
REVOLUTIONARY COMMAND COUNCIL DECREED PAY INCREASES EFFECTIVE
JANUARY FIRST FOR ARMY ENLISTED MEN, POLICEMENT, DRIVERS,
TEACHERS AND UNSKILLED LABORERS WHO WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT. THE
PRESS HAS HERALDED THE INCREASES AS "FRESH GAINS TO WIDE
SECTIONS OF THE TOILING MASSES" AND THE MINISTER OF FINANCE
ESTIMATES THAT THE INCREASE WILL COST THE GOI AN ADDITIONAL
100 MILLION DOLLARS. THE CIVILIAN PAY INCREASES STANDARDIZE PAY
SCALES FOR AFFECTED CATEGORIES OF EMPLOYEES THROUGHOUT
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, WHICH IN GENERAL HAVE WIDELY DIVERGENT
PAY AND PROMOTION SYSTEMS.

2. BECAUSE THE GOI HAS NOT SYSTEMATICALLY PUBLISHED
BOTH NEW AND OLD SALARY SCALES, ONLY GENERAL
COMPARISONS ARE POSSIBLE. THE FOLLOWING ESTIMATES
THE IMPACT OF THE INCREASES ON EACH GROUP:
--ARMY ENLISTED MEN. INCREASE AMOUNT TO 50 PERCENT
OR MORE AT MOST GRADES. A NON-CONSCRIPT BUT "UNEDUCATED PRIVATE,
FOR EXAMPLE, RECEIVED 21 IRAQI DINARS (ID)-- 72 US
DOLLARS--A MONTH PRIOR TO THE DECREE'S INCREASE TO
36 ID (122 US DOLLARS.).

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--POLICEMEN, DRIVERS AND TEACHERS. SALARIES FOR THESE
GROUPS HAVE BEEN INCREASED BY 10-20 ID (34-68 US DOLLARS)
A MONTH. THE 20 ID (68 US DOLLARS) ACROSS-THE-BOARD PAY
INCREASE FOR TEACHERS, FOR EXAMPLE, BOOSTS STARTING
SALARIES FROM 28 TO 48 ID (105 TO 173 US DOLLARS A MONTH.
--UNSKILLED LABORERS. MINIMUM WAGE FOR UNSKILLED
LABORERS IN THE "SOCIALIST SECTOR", I.E., THOSE

EMPLOYED BY THE GOVERNMENT, HAS BEEN INCREASED FROM 650 FILS TO ONE ID (2.20 TO 3.40 US DOLLARS) A DAY.

3. COMMENT: SALARIES IN ALMOST ALL CASES FORM ONLY ABOUT 50-60 PERCENT OF TOTAL COMPENSATION, WHICH ALSO INCLUDES FAMILY ALLOWANCES, REIMBURSEMENTS FOR TRAVEL TO AND FROM WORK, DISCOUNT TICKETS ON IRAQI AIRWAYS, CONCESSIONARY INTEREST RATES FOR HOME CONSTRUCTION LOANS AND OTHER BENEFITS.

4. THE PAY INCREASES FOR ARMY ENLISTED MEN ARE AIMED AT THE LARGE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING AND THAT OF OFFICERS. FOR POLITICAL REASONS, THE LATTER ARE AMONG THE HIGHEST PAID GROUPS IN IRAQ. AN OFFICER WITH THE RANK OF MAJOR, FOR EXAMPLE, REPORTEDLY RECEIVES PAID COMPENSATION OF ABOUT 225-250 ID (765-850 US DOLLARS), INCLUDING BASE PAY AND ALLOWANCES FOR SPECIAL SKILLS, ETC., BUT NOT INCLUDING OTHER BENEFITS. NO INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ABOUT ARMY ENLISTED RETENTION RATES BUT ANOTHER POSSIBLE MOTIVATION IS LENGTHENING AVERAGE PERIODS OF SERVICE.

5. ON THE CIVILIAN SIDE, A MINISTERIAL-LEVEL COMMITTEE IS REPORTEDLY DEVISING A STANDARDIZED PAY AND PROMOTION SCALE TO BE APPLIED THROUGHOUT THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT. THE SALARY INCREASES FOR POLICEMEN, DRIVERS AND TEACHERS WERE ANNOUNCED BEFORE THE ENTIRE REVISED SCHEME IS READY BECAUSE OF RECRUITMENT PROBLEMS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN THESE VOCATIONS. THE DECREE LIMITED THE INCREASE IN THE MINIMUM WAGE FOR UNSKILLED LABORERS TO THE "SOCIALIST SECTOR" BECAUSE AN ECONOMY-WIDE INCREASE WOULD HAVE ACTIVATED ESCALATION CLAUSES IN GOI CONTRACTS WITH FOREIGN COMPANIES.
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